United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement last night, condemns violence in Rwanda after deaths of Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi; urges Rwandese security forces to prevent attacks on United Nations personnel.

+ Security Council, also last night, calls on Salvadorian authorities to correct shortcomings in recent elections so that next round of voting reflects will of people.

+ Secretary-General, in Geneva, condemns Rwanda violence, particularly deaths of country's Prime Minister and 10 Belgian peace-keepers; will report urgently to Security Council on measures to protect United Nations personnel.

+ Secretary-General meets with senior United Nations officials to discuss situations in Mozambique, Angola, South Africa and Zaire; to meet tomorrow with Special Representative for former Yugoslavia.

+ Member States owe United Nations $2.9 billion as of 31 March; $1.1 billion owed to regular budget and $1.8 billion to peace-keeping.

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The Security Council last night strongly condemned the violence in Rwanda after the tragic deaths on Wednesday of the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi. Expressing regret at the incident, it noted the heavy loss of life, including the death of Government leaders, civilians and at least 10 Belgian peace-keepers with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rawanda (UNAMIR).

In a statement read out by its President, Colin Keating (New Zealand), the Council strongly condemned the perpetrators of those acts who, it said, must be held responsible. It urged the Rwandese security forces to put an end to the attacks on United Nations personnel and to cooperate with UNAMIR in the implementation of its mandate. The Council demanded that security be restored throughout the country, particularly in Kigali and the demilitarized zone.

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The Council also demanded that free access to the airport be restored, and urged respect for the safety and security of civilians and foreigners, including United Nations personnel. It appealed to all Rwandese not to commit further violence, and to maintain the positions they held before the deaths of the Presidents.

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In another meeting last night, the Security Council called on the authorities in El Salvador to correct shortcomings in last month's elections in order to guarantee that the next round of voting on 24 April reflects the will of the people. In a statement read out by its President, Colin Keating (New Zealand), the Council called for recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) to be implemented.

The Secretary-General's recommendations included increasing the number of polling centres, particularly in urban areas, and improving the training of electoral personnel. He also called for the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to deny publicity to organizations that were not political parties. Pointing out "serious flaws in the methods used", the Secretary-General recommended that various aspects of the Tribunal's functioning be reconsidered.

The Council called for full implementation of the 1992 Peace Accords. It said progress was needed regarding the provisions on public security and the constitutional reforms recommended by the Commission on the Truth, especially reform of the judiciary. The Council urged that delays be avoided and distortions corrected so that the Peace Accords could be implemented and the goals of the peace process achieved.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today strongly condemned the latest acts of violence in Rwanda, particularly the deaths of Prime Minister Agatha Uwilingiyimana and 10 Belgian soldiers with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). The Secretary-General, who was in Geneva, also expressed his condolences to the families of the soldiers and to the Belgian Government and people.

The Secretary-General has been in contact with all the parties concerned and with his Special Representative in Kigali, and has asked him to take all possible steps to ensure security throughout the country and especially in Kigali. The Secretary-General is preparing an urgent report to the Security Council on measures needed to protect United Nations personnel in Rwanda.

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Continuing his visit to Geneva, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros today met with Carlos Alzamora, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Compensation Committee. According to a United Nations, they reviewed the Commission's work and the current state of compensation payments relating to

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Iraq and Kuwait. The Secretary-General then met with his Senior Political Advisor Ismat Kittani, who had just returned from a visit to Mozambique. Mr. Kittani had reminded the parties in that country of the importance of holding elections no later than next October.

The Secretary-General also met with his Special Representative for Angola, Alioune Blondin Beye, who updated him on the peace talks between the Angolan Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in Lusaka. The Secretary-General expressed concern that the talks be concluded rapidly. He then met with his Special Representative for South Africa and Zaire, Lakhdar Brahimi. They discussed the upcoming South African elections and the United Nations role in them.

Tomorrow, the Secretary-General will meet with his Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi. Mr. Akashi will also have meetings with the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata.

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As of 31 March, Member States owed the United Nations a total of $2.9 billion, according to the latest update on the Organization's financial situation. Of that amount, $1.1 billion was for assessments for the regular budget and $1.8 billion was for peace-keeping operations.

The United States -- the largest debtor -- owed almost $300 million to the regular budget, and almost $440 million to the peace-keeping budget, for the current year; it owed more than $230 million and $100 million respectively for prior years. Japan, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom all had regular budget contributions outstanding for the current year, but not for previous years. However, the Russian Federation owed a total of $545 million in peace-keeping contributions.

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